



**U.S. Department of Justice
U.S. Attorney's Office
Western District of Texas**

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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THREE AUSTIN MEN PLEAD GUILTY TO ROBBING AUSTIN BANK ON HALLOWEEN

United States Attorney Johnny Sutton announced that 26-year-old Gregory Lee Valle, 19-year-old Michael Joshua Compton and 23-year-old John Anthony Rodela appeared in federal court earlier today and pleaded guilty to robbing a Wachovia Bank in Austin on Halloween last year.

Appearing before United States District Judge Sam Sparks, Valle and Compton both pleaded guilty to armed bank robbery (punishable by up to 25 years in federal prison) and using a firearm during a crime of violence (punishable by a consecutive sentence of not less than 10 years imprisonment because one of the firearms used was a "sawed-off" shotgun). Rodela pleaded guilty to aiding and abetting the armed bank robbery (punishable by up to 25 years imprisonment) and aiding and abetting the possession of an unregistered firearm—a "sawed-off" shotgun (punishable by up to 10 years imprisonment). Sentencing is scheduled for 9:00am on April 4, 2008.

By pleading guilty, the defendants admitted that on the afternoon of October 31, 2007, they entered the Wachovia Bank located at 6208 McNeil Drive in Austin, armed with shotguns and demanded money from bank employees and customers. The defendants fled the bank taking with them approximately \$15,800 in cash as well as personal items from their victims such as purses, wallets and cell phones. Compton and Rodela, as well as a fourth defendant in this case, 23-year-old Jerry Daniel Cantu, were arrested by Austin Police officers shortly after the incident. Officers arrested Valle the following morning.

Federal bank robbery and firearms charges are pending against Cantu. No trial date has been scheduled.

This case is being investigated by the Federal Bureau of Investigation, Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives together with investigators from the Austin Police Department. Assistant United States Attorney Gerald C. Carruth is prosecuting this case on behalf of the Government.

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